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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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OFFICE OF INFORMATION

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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT Wednesday, February 26, 1941

Subject: "WHAT'S IN THE SCHOOL LUNCH BOX TODAY?" Information from the Farm Security Administration. U. S. Department of Agriculture.

--ooOoo--

Are you one of the mothers who "wracked her brain" this morning to think up something to go in the children's school lunch box, and finally picked up some left-overs and said "This will have to do?" If so, you're 'in the same boat' with a lot of other mothers. That school lunch box is a five-day-a-week puzzle, particularly this time of year when ideas are worn threadbare and children are tired of the same old thing.

Several million school children now eat hot noon lunches at school, but other millions still trudge along with the little lunch box or dinner pail, which has to be filled about 165 days a year. With an effort to be timely, the Farm Security Administration comes to us today with low-cost suggestions used by its borrower families on varying the school lunch. We start by trying to add glamor to our old standby the sandwich.

Let's see..... Have you ever tried cottage cheese--homemade--with homemade jam or jelly or marmalade for filling? It's a good idea. You can also use honey, or apple butter, putting the cheese on one slice of bread and the sweet on the other. Or you can mix cottage cheese with chopped raisins, homegrown nuts, diced celery, raw sliced tomato, or strips of home-cured bacon.

Peanut butter sandwiches can be varied too. You can combine the butter with mashed stewed prunes, banana pulp, ground raisins, or jelly. Or you can crush your own fresh roasted peanuts, mix them with grated raw carrot, and blend them with salad dressing.

(over)

Have you ever heard of a vegetable sandwich? Some people make them regularly and insist they're good. They use such fillings as chopped string beans, navy or lima beans, peas, and asparagus--homegrown in the garden. To make a bean sandwich, they bake or boil navy or lima beans, drain off the liquid, and mix them with chopped pickle, relish, tomato sauce, or chili sauce and perhaps some mayonnaise. Some of the uncooked vegetable fillings are grated raw carrots, beets, ground or grated cabbage with diced raw apples, and chopped raw carrots with nuts, raisins, and salad dressing.

You can vary the hearty meat sandwich by grinding or chopping the meat and mixing it with some raw or cooked vegetables and mayonnaise. Or add a layer of chopped vegetables to a meat sandwich - such as putting chopped string beans next to a slice of ham. Egg sandwiches can be varied by mixing celery and nuts with a minced hard-cooked egg, and combining with cream or salad dressing. Or chop and mix the egg with diced celery, pickles, home-cured bacon cut in small pieces, and a touch of chopped green peppers.

On the sweet side you can make sandwiches from ground raisins, prunes, or apricots moistened with lemon juice. Or you can spread graham crackers with mashed bananas--if inexpensive--melted chocolate, brown sugar, jelly, or preserves. Sandwich bread itself can be varied by putting some nuts, raisins, currants, or dried fruit such as prunes, into the dough before it is baked.

Children often enjoy bread in a new form - a twist perhaps instead of a loaf, or a fancy shape made with a cooky cutter. You can even change the form of the sandwich - that is, you can make a ribbon or a rolled sandwich. To make a ribbon sandwich, use two or more kinds of bread, and spread each slice with butter or any of the creamy fillings. Then stack the slices together, press firmly, and slice.

To make a rolled sandwich, trim off the crust and slice the bread rather thin lengthwise of the loaf. Spread it lightly with butter or a creamy filling and roll

it up as you would a cinnamon or jelly roll. Press firmly together, let stand a little while in waxed paper or a damp cloth, and then slice as you would a jelly roll.

But the school lunch box can have much more in it than sandwiches, and these "other things" may be just what will give variety. Someone has said that every lunch should "include something filling, something crisp, something juicy, and something sweet" --not all soft, solid, or dry foods. Also it is bad to resort to stomach-filling foods rather than body-building foods.

A good school lunch is planned and partly prepared in advance - maybe the night before or some even the week before. It contains some fresh or cooked fruits or vegetables - in little jars if not in sandwiches. Cooked fruit may be baked apples, stewed prunes, apricots or peaches, or stewed raisins, plums, pears, and berries. Some of the canned vegetables which are good cold are tomatoes, baked beans, and asparagus. Among the raw vegetables are ripe tomatoes, carrots, whole or cut into carrot sticks, celery plain or stuffed with cottage cheese, and chunks of fresh cabbage or crisp lettuce.

Each lunch should contain something to drink if possible, preferably milk, but tomato juice or grape juice is a good substitute. There should also be a small dessert - perhaps a bread or rice pudding, a dried fruit or cornstarch pudding, a soft or baked custard, or, what may be easier, a cup cake, slice of plain cake, several homemade cookies or gingersnaps.

From time to time, it's fun to put a little surprise in the lunch box. This can be a muffin with a spoonful of jam or jelly in the center, a candied apple, a decorated cooky, a popcorn ball, or even a little handful of raisins, homegrown nut meats, or dried fruit washed but not cooked. Or you can make cinnamon or butter-scotch rolls very easily, by rolling out biscuit dough thinly, covering it with butter, sprinkling with brown sugar and cinnamon, and baking.

Things to leave out of the lunch box are fried foods like pancakes and doughnuts, hot dogs with mustard, rich cakes with frosting, pies that 'run', and any foods that get soft or soggy.....

This completes our school lunch box suggestions for today, and the Farm Security Administration hopes you may find some of them helpful.

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